

Racing Toward the Future: USU STARS! GEAR UP Students Race Their Own Electric Cars | CEHS

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Students from 19 Utah schools recently gathered in Tooele to race small electric vehicles as a part of USU's Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP).

Greenpower USA, which promotes engineering education, gives frames and motors to Utah students for electric cars. The students have been working to build the rest, finding innovative ways to maximize distance before the car battery loses power.

The go-kart sized cars are built by the students with help from program mentors. The races, hosted at the Utah Motorsports Campus, are a culmination of months of hard work.

The goal is to see how long your team's car can run on a single battery charge before dying. This program has allowed students to gain real world experience in numerous STEM related topics. Preparing our students for successful futures is our number one priority, and hands on experience is invaluable in helping them reach their goals.

"These kids have put a lot of time and effort into this project, so this is a big day for them," said Dustin Allen, a site coordinator at Logan High School. "They've had to persevere just to get here." Allen's group, composed of three freshmen and a junior, have been working on the electric car since before the school year started.

"We've had a lot of technical issues over the past few months, but we've learned a lot," said Erick Guadarrama, a freshman. "It's a ton of fun once you get in there and start driving."

Building electric cars is one way that GEAR UP helps young students gain experience with engineering and science, and the project teaches other life skills as well. "They got to learn things like how to work together, how to communicate with each other and how to overcome obstacles," Allen said. "The STEM things they learn are important, and they've learned some life lessons that are just as important."

Utah State University's Edith Bowen Lab School also sent racers. The elementary school children raced against each other and were limited to building the body of their vehicles, but had similar opportunities to learn. "These kids are the engineers and scientists of tomorrow," said Stuart Baggaley, a fourth grade teacher at the lab school. "They didn't get to build the motors or anything, but I guarantee every one of them is more interested in engineering than they were before this project."

Learn more about [USU STARS! GEAR UP](#)